



Department of Justice

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MONDAY, MARCH 26, 2007
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ATTORNEY GENERAL GONZALES HIGHLIGHTS DEPARTMENT EFFORTS TO COMBAT SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION OF CHILDREN IN COLORADO

Announces New Public Service Advertisement Campaign Targeting Teen Girls with the Message "Think Before You Post"

DENVER – Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales today joined U.S. Attorney Troy Eid to highlight the ongoing efforts of federal, state and local law enforcement, as well as community leaders, in combating the sexual abuse and exploitation of children in Colorado.

"The sexual abuse and exploitation of children is one of the most horrific crimes plaguing our nation today," said Attorney General Gonzales. "As Attorney General and as a father, I realize the importance of seeking out and prosecuting these individuals to the fullest extent of the law. I'm encouraged by the efforts of the Project Safe Childhood task force in Colorado whose tireless dedication to the protection of our children has consistently won harsher penalties and longer prison sentences for sexual predators across the state."

Launched in May 2006, Project Safe Childhood is a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from sexual exploitation and abuse. Led by the U.S. Attorneys Offices, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet, as well as identify and rescue victims. Last year alone, the Department of Justice prosecuted 1,543 cases involving the sexual exploitation or abuse of children.

"Keeping Colorado's children safe means our entire community must come together to meet the challenge posed by the Internet, cell camera-phones, and other electronic technologies," stated U.S. Attorney Eid. "Leaders from government at every level—state, local, tribal and federal—must partner with schools, libraries, the business community, and our civic institutions to prevent, prosecute and punish sexual predators."

In addition to participating in the law enforcement roundtable, Attorney General Gonzales also unveiled new public service advertisements (PSAs) regarding the dangers of online predators. The ads, which were developed jointly by the U.S. Department of Justice, the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children® (NCMEC), and the Ad Council, are designed to educate teenage girls about the potential dangers of posting and sharing personal information online. The *Think Before You Post* campaign reminds teens that "anything you post online, anyone can see, family, friends and even not-so-friendly people."

Popular social networking sites such as MySpace, Facebook, and Sconex make it easier for teens to post and share personal information, pictures, and videos, which may make them more vulnerable to online predators. Teenage girls are particularly at risk of online sexual exploitation.

A recent study by University of New Hampshire researchers for NCMEC found that of the approximately one in seven youth who received a sexual solicitation or approach over the Internet, 70 percent were girls.

For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit <http://www.projectsafechildhood.gov>. For more information about the *Think Before You Post* campaign, please visit <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

Project Safe Childhood partners for the District of Colorado include the FBI, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, U.S. Postal Inspection Service, U.S. Marshals Service, the Colorado Attorney General, Colorado District Attorneys Council, Colorado Department of Public Safety, the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC), Boulder Valley School District, the Internet Safety Foundation, Qwest, and Comcast.

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